



EAST LIBERTY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

116 South Highland Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15206 412.441.3800 www.ELPC.church

As a diverse community of believers, we strive to follow God – the Creator who calls us, Jesus who teaches us, and the Spirit who empowers us. We show God’s unconditional love by providing a refuge for spiritual growth, ardently pursuing justice, and extending Christ’s radical hospitality to all. (Strategic Vision mission statement, 2011)

2ND SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

JANUARY 18, 2026 • 11 AM SANCTUARY WORSHIP

TIME OF PREPARATION

True peace is not merely the absence of tension; it is the presence of justice. It is not enough for the church to be active in the realm of ideas; it must move out to the arena of social action.

— Martin Luther King Jr., “Stride Toward Freedom: The Montgomery Story”

PRELUDE

“Rock of Ages”

Peter Pindar Stearns

“Give Me Jesus”

Richard Billingham

WELCOME & CHURCH NEWS

Rev. Dr. Michael Diaz, Rev. Sarah Robbins

Everyone in worship today is encouraged to please sign your name in the red Friendship Books that are in each pew.

Doing so will help ELPC maintain a pastoral connection with all who worship with us. Thank you!

CALL TO WORSHIP (pres-outlook.org)

Don Breitbarth

Leader: God calls us here together — each of us, all of us, our whole selves.

People: We bring our questions, our longings, our hopes, our dreams and our fears.

Leader: Jesus invites us to come and see where God is at work.

People: Across the street and across the globe, Jesus is present.

Leader: Within these walls and within our hearts, God is here.

People: Let us worship the God who reaches out in love and invites us to come and see!

* PROCESSIONAL HYMN #451

“Open My Eyes, That I May See”

OPEN MY EYES

MOMENTS WITH OUR CHILDREN

Sara Hackett

Children of any age are welcome to come forward for Moments with our Children. Afterwards:

- *Children age 4-6th grade go to Sunday School: Sacred Stories. Parents pick up their kids after worship (age 4- 3rd grade in Room 206; grades 4-6 in Room 207). If this is your child's first time attending, please accompany your child upstairs and check in with the teachers.*
- *Children age 3 and younger can play, sing songs and hear stories in the nursery from 8:30 am-12:30 pm.*

CALL TO CONFESSION

Don Breitbarth

Leader: Ever dependent on the grace of God, let us affirm our brokenness and trust God’s goodness to carry us through to a new day. God of our baptismal waters,

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (*in unison*)

Don Breitbarth

You sent the Baptist to point to your Son. But too often, we abandon his message and point only to ourselves. We point to our worship preferences rather than the God we worship. We point to our status rather than the grace that makes us all equal. We point to our values rather than the One who has always valued everyone. We point to our traditions rather than to the One who calls us to let go. We point to our past rather than to the One who calls us into the future. Forgive us, Lord, for pointing in all the wrong directions.

* Indicates where you may please rise in body or spirit.

*Indicates where you may rise in body or spirit.

TIME OF SILENT CONFESSION

ASSURANCE OF GOD'S FORGIVENESS *(written by Stephen Fearing)*

Don Breitbarth

Leader: God of our baptismal hope,

People: **Forgive us when we do not wait patiently for your direction. Forgive us when we are too patient with our misdirection. Hold our gaze on your baptismal promise sealed in the life, death, and resurrection of your Son. Through the power of your Spirit, give us the courage to speak what we have seen and point to the One who takes away the sins of the world. In the name of your son, Jesus Christ, we pray.**

HYMN OF RESPONSE #834

“Precious Lord, Take My Hand”

PRECIOUS LORD

READING

from Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s speech to Spelman College in 1960

Rev. Dr. Diaz

I do not give you this element of faith and superficial optimism. I do not stand here as a detached spectator. As I say to you this afternoon, have faith in the future, I speak as one who lives every day amidst the threat of death. I speak as one who has had to stand often amidst the surging murmur of life's restless sea, I speak as one who has been battered often by the jostling winds of adversity, but I have faith in the future. I have faith in the future because I have faith in God and I believe that there is a power, a creative force in this universe seeking at all times to bring down prodigious hilltops of evil and pull low gigantic mountains of injustice. If we will believe this and struggle along, we will be able to achieve it.

Leader: May God bless the truth in these words.

People: **Amen.**

SPECIAL MUSIC

“If I Can Help Somebody”

A. Bazel Androzzo

If I can help somebody as I pass along,

If I can cheer somebody with a word or song,

If I can show somebody they are traveling wrong,

Then my living will not be in vain.

If I can do my duty as a Christian ought,

If I can bring back beauty to a world up-wrought,

If I can spread love's message that the Master taught,

Then my living will not be in vain.

SCRIPTURE READING

John 1:29-42 *(Inclusive Bible)*

Rev. Robbins

Leader: This is the word of God for the people of God.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

SERMON

“The Callback”

Rev. Sarah Robbins

TIME OF SILENT REFLECTION

INVITATION TO ANOINTING AND PRAYER

Rev. Woodworth

Are you in need of an affirmation that God is journeying with you? Do you desire for someone to pray alongside you? If so, please come forward, down the center aisle, as we sing. Volunteer prayer partners will be present to listen, intercede, anoint and hold you in God's love. You may also visit one of our prayer stations and light a candle in prayer at the entrance to the Trinity Chapel.

HYMN #792

“There Is a Balm in Gilead”

BALM IN GILEAD

HYMN #799

“I Love the Lord, Who Heard My Cry”

I LOVE THE LORD

THE LORD'S PRAYER *(in language/version closest to your heart)*

Rev. Woodworth

The Lord's Prayer can be found on pg. 35 (English), on pg. 40 (Español), or on pg. 45 (ἕλ-ᾠ) in the hymnal.

*Indicates where you may rise in body or spirit.

SHARING GOD’S PEACE

Leader: La paz de Cristo esté con ustedes.

People: **Y también contigo.**

Rev. Dr. Diaz and Rev. Woodworth
The peace of Christ be with you.
And also with you.

OFFERING INVITATION

Rev. Dr. Diaz

Please remember to write your name on your offering envelope.

You can also scan this QR code to give online or visit www.ELPC.church/donate.



OFFERTORY ANTHEM

“Total Praise”

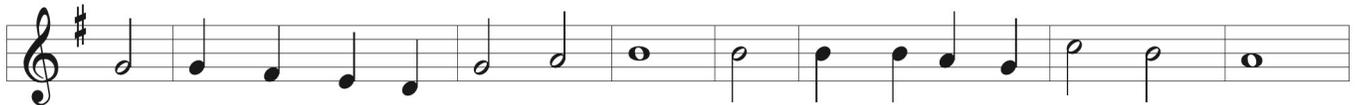
Richard Smallwood

Lord, I will lift mine eyes to the hills knowing my help is coming from You. Your peace you give me in time of the storm. You are the source of my strength. You are the strength of my life. I lift my hands in total praise to you. Amen.

In loving memory of Richard Smallwood
(30 November 1948 – 30 December 2025)

* **DOXOLOGY AT THE PRESENTATION #607**

OLD HUNDREDTH



Praise God, from whom all bless - ings flow; praise Christ, all crea - tures here be - low;



praise Ho - ly Spir - it ev - er - more; praise Tri - une God, whom we a - dore. A - men.

* **PRAYER OF DEDICATION** (*in unison*)

Rev. Dr. Diaz

Holy God, we are not lacking in any gift, and we give you thanks and praise. Receive the gifts of our hearts and lives, not as vain sacrifice, but as a joyful response for your steadfast love. Use what you have given us to your glory in every place. Transform our gifts to become a beacon of hope, a word of life, and a balm of healing for all of creation. Amen.

* **RECESSIONAL HYMN #379**

“We Shall Overcome”

WE SHALL OVERCOME

* **CHARGE & BENEDICTION**

Rev. Robbins

* **POSTLUDE**

“Improvisation on We Shall Overcome”

Carl Haywood
Dr. Edward Alan Moore, *organ*



Notes regarding the music sung in today's service are available on our website —

<http://tiny.cc/elpcworshipnotes>

Our full worship service is being livestreamed on Facebook and archived at www.ELPC.church. By being in attendance, you give permission for incidences where you appear within the video.

Assisted listening devices are available for our Sanctuary worship in the Ushers' Room. Please print your contact info and device number on the sign-out sheet if you need to use one.

Please silence all electronic devices before the service begins.

◆ PARTICIPANTS IN TODAY'S SERVICE

Preaching: Rev. Sarah Robbins (she/they)
Liturgists: Rev. Dr. Michael Diaz (he/him/él)
Rev. BJ Woodworth (he/him)
Sara Hackett (she/her)
Don Breitbarth
Musicians: Dr. Edward Alan Moore (he/him)
Director of Music and Arts
ELPC Chancel Choir
Soloists: Adrianna Cleveland,
David Jennings-Smith
Kym Laret
Denise Sheffey-Powell
Beadle: Polly McQueen
Crucifer: Linda Davis
Sound: Tim Benedict and Wayne Gaines

◆ WORSHIP FLOWERS

If you would like to sponsor flowers for our weekly worship service in honor or memory of a loved one, please visit tiny.cc/SundayFlowers, use the QR code, or call Norma (412.441.3800 x211). The cost is \$260. Reserve your date at least one week before the Sunday you wish to sponsor the flowers.



◆ SUNDAY WORSHIP

8:45 am.....**Journey Worship (now in the Chapel).**
An interactive, energetic service for those seeking a fresh encounter with the gospel of Jesus Christ.
11 am.....**Sanctuary Worship.** Our largest service with a multi-cultural congregation and music from organ, piano and choir.

◆ WEEKDAY WORSHIP

Taizé: Prayerful Song and Quiet Meditation

Chants and periods of meditative silence modeled after the Taizé community in France. Rev. BJ Woodworth leads this service in the Chapel.

Wednesdays, 7 pm

Prayer Room (in Highland Ave hallway)

Come to sit and pray in silence. Come to experience the quiet in the midst of the wonderful busyness.

Available everyday

◆ WEEKLY SPIRITUAL LIFE OFFERINGS

Contemplative Prayer on Mondays

Rev. BJ Woodworth will lead a time on Zoom of 30 minutes of communal silence and guided meditation on scripture.

Mondays, 7:30 to 8 am

Meeting ID: 959 8065 3992 • Passcode: bestill

Tuesday Morning Zoom Prayer Group

Join Steve Evrard on Zoom for a time of scripture readings, responsive prayer, and interactive dialogue.

Tuesdays, 8 to 8:30 am

Meeting ID: 896 9680 6662 • Passcode: 116

WELCOME VISITORS!

We are grateful to have you join us for worship this morning and ask you to **sign your name in our red Friendship Books** in each pew.

If you're a first time visitor, please fill out a **NEW HERE** card found in the pew backs and give that card to a pastor at the Penn Ave or Highland Ave entrance to receive a gift in exchange for your filled out card. Our pastors will reach out to you for any prayer requests and to answer any questions you might have.

Attend an *Inquirers' Class* on **Sunday, Feb 1 after the 11 am service** to learn more about ELPC, Presbyterian theology, and to explore membership. Please sign up online at elpc.church/visitus/becoming-a-member, or contact Jen King (JenK@coh.net).

Call the Church Office (412.441.3800), or visit the ELPC website at www.ELPC.church.

Sunday, 18 January 2026 – Second Sunday after Epiphany

Hymn of Response - *Precious Lord, Take My Hand* was published in 1938 as *Take My Hand, Precious Lord: Solo for Prayer and Meditation*. Thomas A. Dorsey (1899-1993) was born near Atlanta, Georgia and moved to Chicago in 1919. In 1931 he helped establish the first gospel choir at Ebenezer Baptist Church in Chicago and then went on to lead the gospel choir at Pilgrim Baptist Church in Chicago for 60 years. He wrote the text of this beloved hymn in 1932, a week after the death of his wife in childbirth and the subsequent death of his newborn son.

Precious Lord was Martin Luther King, Jr.'s favorite song. On April 4, 1968 he requested musician Ben Branch play *Precious Lord* at a meeting that evening. "Ben, be sure you play my favorite song tonight, *Precious Lord*. Play it real pretty." Those were the last words Dr. King spoke before being slain by an assassin's bullet. Mahalia Jackson sang the song at his funeral on February 9, 1968 at Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WduYIw8Yrnw>

Special Music - On Feb. 4, 1968, two months before he was assassinated, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. gave a sermon called, *The Drum Major Instinct*. In it, he imagined his own funeral and said he wanted to be remembered for serving others, not for his fame or his many accomplishments. He ended the sermon by quoting from *If I Can Help Somebody*. Dr. King first heard this song in Denver in 1956 and later encouraged Mahalia Jackson to record it, which she did in 1963. <https://youtu.be/okzmXyoSKeg?si=kIjzWE216mRiUnUG>

Offertory Anthem - Richard Smallwood (1948-2025) was born in Atlanta, Georgia and graduated from Howard University with a music degree in 1971 and Master of Divinity in 2004. He was a founding member of the Howard University Gospel Choir and was ordained as a minister at Washington, D.C.'s historic Metropolitan Baptist Church in 2004 and subsequently became the church's Artist-in-Residence.

Smallwood composed one of his best-known songs, *Total Praise*, in 1996 when he was caring for his mother who was experiencing dementia and a family friend who was dying of cancer. Of the piece Smallwood said: "I felt left by God, I was trying to write a pity-party song, but God pulled me to do a praise song. God said, 'I want your praise no matter what the situation you are in, good or bad.' It's about trusting him."

The Reverend Richard L. Smallwood died in Sandy Spring, Maryland, on December 30, 2025, due to kidney failure at the age of 77.

Recessional Hymn/Postlude - *We Shall Overcome* is recognized as the unofficial anthem of the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. It was popular with folk singers, including Pete Seeger. Joan Baez led a crowd of 300,000 in singing *We Shall Overcome* at the Lincoln Memorial in August 1963. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. recited the words to the hymn in Memphis on Sunday, March 31, 1968 during his final sermon before being assassinated the following week.

Composer Carl Haywood is a native of Portsmouth, Virginia. Dr. Haywood served as director of choral activities at Norfolk State University and for twenty-six years he served as organist/choir director at Grace Episcopal Church, Norfolk. *Improvisation on We Shall Overcome* was composed for the MLK service at St. James's Church, Richmond, Virginia.

TODAY AT ELPC

Welcome Visitors!

If you are joining us for the first time, we're glad you are here! Please fill out a **NEW HERE** card found in the pew backs and give that card to a pastor at the Penn Ave or Highland Ave entrance. You will receive a gift in exchange for your filled out card. *Our pastors will reach out to you for any prayer requests and to answer any questions you might have.*

Health Ministry Invites Members

The recently reformed *Deacon's Health Ministry* will meet today at 12:30 pm in the Highland Room after worship. Non-Deacons are welcome! For more info, contact Tom Sturgill (sturgillpgh@yahoo.com).

ELPC Families are Hosting a Variety Show

Families with children and teens are hosting a *Variety Show* today at Ivy Park Nursing and Rehabilitation Center. Families are invited to eat lunch and coordinate tasks here at ELPC after worship in the Fellowship Room. We will leave ELPC at 1:15 pm to go to Ivy Park to set up and welcome residents (you can ride in the church van or drive on your own). There is a small parking lot at 5609 Fifth Ave, 15232, and street parking behind the building.

Come with a musical performance, joke, magic trick, story, art piece, dance or whatever you dream up to share with the residents! Sara will have some fun and easy things folks can help with if you forget your kazoo! See Sara Hackett in the Fellowship Room to attend, or email her (SaraH@coh.net).



Pray Always in All Ways Weekly Gatherings – Wednesdays



Have you ever wondered what prayer is or if you even believe in prayer? Have you ever longed to pray more but struggled to know how? Together we will talk about our struggles and hopes with prayer and explore a wide variety of prayer forms, including body prayer, prayer beads, icons, silence, and prayer as simple awareness in life. Join us on 4 Wednesdays (Jan 21, 28, Feb 4 and 11) at ELPC from 5:30-7 pm in the Good Samaritan Room. Register with the QR code or at:



Journey Service in the Chapel

Please note our 8:45 am *Journey* worship service is now held in the chapel! The chapel will allow us to have a space for children and a more intimate space to worship. Unfortunately, we will not be able to broadcast the service via Zoom or on social media. Join us on Sundays!

Young Adult Happy Hour – Jan 19

Young Adults (in their 20s, 30s and 40s) are invited to the *Young Adult Happy Hour* at the home of Russell Ludwig on Monday, Jan 19 from 6-7:30 pm. Stop by for appetizers and drinks (both alcoholic and non). For details and to RSVP, contact Sara Hackett (SaraH@coh.net).

Environmental Team's New Book Study – Jan 22

The Environmental Team of the Justice Committee is reading *Shade: the Promise of a Forgotten Natural Resource* by Sam Bloch. Read along and join us for a discussion on Thursday, Jan 22 at 7 pm on Zoom. In his new book, environmental journalist Sam Bloch calls for more shade in urban areas, with more trees in parks and residential areas. Contact Nancy Heastings (n.heastings@comcast.net) for Zoom link.

Prayer Vigil for Immigrants – Jan 23

Every Friday, the Sisters of St. Joseph, Pax Christi and Casa San Jose host a prayer vigil outside the I.C.E. offices on the South Side. It is a peaceful interfaith vigil where folks gather outside to support our immigrant neighbors. ELPC will be hosting the vigil on Friday, Jan 23rd from 8:30–9:30 am with liturgy, music, prayers, and chants. Join us at 3000 Sidney Street 15203, for a time of advocacy and solidarity.

Hope Academy Teaching Artists to Perform – Feb 1

The *Cathedral Concerts* series at ELPC continues on Sunday, Feb 1 at 3 pm with a performance by Hope Academy Teaching Artists, under the direction of Anqwenique Kinsel. The concert is free and open to all. Invite your family and friends! A freewill offering will be received. For more details, visit tiny.cc/cathedral-concerts.



INQUIRERS CLASS Sunday, Feb 1 after 11 am worship

Attend an *Inquirers' Class* on Sunday, Feb 1 after the 11 am Sanctuary worship service in the McKelvy Room.

Learn more about ELPC, Presbyterian theology, and to explore membership. Lunch will be provided.

Register online using this QR code, visit elpc.church/visit-us/becoming-a-member, or see one of the Pastors.





As a caring congregation of faith, we ask you to remember the following people in your prayers:

Linda Benedict, Ida C's brother, Mary E, Mary F, Loren F, James G, Cathie Hajdu, Kathy K's neighbor David, Chuck Lukehart, Jennifer M's father Karle, Polly M's friend Justine, Chris Markwell, Rhonda Perroz, Linda S., David S., Brandon T's brother; Cheryl; Finn; Ida & Tagi; Jackie; PTS DMin students.

*Condolences to **Joe Harris** on the loss of his daughter Crystal.
Condolences to the **Bossers family** on the loss of their brother-in-law Carl Perkins*

Committee Meetings This Week

Deacons Health Ministry Today @ 12:15 pm
Session..... Tuesday, Jan 20 @ 7:00 pm
Peace..... Thursday, Jan 22 @ 5:30 pm
Justice..... Sunday, Jan 25 @ 12:00 pm

Active Intruder Safety Training – Feb 7

ELPC's Safety and Security Advisory Committee invites everyone to attend an important training session on Saturday, Feb 7 from 1-4 pm at ELPC concerning how to remain safe if an intruder enters the church building. There will be a local safety officer who will share helpful information and answer our questions. Pre-register by Jan 31 at <https://forms.office.com/r/j6aTkreA1T>, or contact Jen King (412.441.3800 x222).

PA Against the Death Penalty Postcard Campaign – Feb 8

Join the effort to pass legislation that will finally abolish the death penalty in Pennsylvania! On Sunday, Feb 8 after the 11 am worship service, come to the Garth Overlook Room to sign postcards that will be delivered to the Harrisburg offices of the Governor, Attorney General, District Attorney, State representatives and Senators. Contact Vivienne Selia for info (vselia@comcast.net).

LGBTQIA+ Ministry Spiritual Gathering – Feb 8

All are invited to the monthly spiritual gathering of the LGBTQIA+ Ministry at 12:30 pm on Sunday, Feb 8 for conversation and lunch. Allies and LGBTQIA+ folks welcome! Contact Wil Forrest, LGBTQIA+ Ministry Coordinator, to attend (Wil@coh.net; 412.441.3800 x218).

Chapel Market Donations Requested

The Chapel Market is stocking up on winter clothes for our neighbors in need. Please consider donating clean, new or gently-used winter coats for toddlers to adults. They also need full-sized toiletry items. **They especially need 2X and 3X warm winter coats right now.** Leave donations in the Highland Lobby.

In our

COMMUNITY



MLK East Liberty Celebration – Jan 19

On Monday, Jan 19 from 1–4 pm, join Pastor Michael and the Kelly Strayhorn Theater community in honoring the enduring vision of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., through *The Beloved Community*—a day of unity, reflection, and creative expression. This celebration includes local leaders, an art exhibition, and dynamic youth musical performances from community arts organizations. Tickets are available at www.kelly-strayhorn.org.

Flower Sponsorships Available for 2026

ELPC's Worship, Music and Arts Committee is excited to announce our new partnership with Jim Ludwig's Blumengarten Florist. Beginning this year, members and congregants will have the opportunity to sponsor customized floral arrangements for the chancel. For the price of \$260, individuals, groups, and families can sponsor two lush arrangements of fresh, seasonal flowers to memorialize or honor loved ones, celebrate special occasions, or mark liturgical milestones.



Sponsors will be recognized for their contributions in several ways—via social media posts; in the bulletin; on the slides that rotate prior to the Sanctuary service; and, with a special acknowledgement by the Pastor during that Sunday's *Welcome and Announcements*. Blumengarten was selected by WMA's Visual Enhancement Subcommittee after a thoughtful review of proposals and floral arrangements from local vendors.

Reserve your special Sunday online by visiting tiny.cc/SundayFlowers; or call Norma (412.441.3800 x211). Reserve your date AT LEAST one week before.



SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES

January 25

– Adults –

Adult classes are held from 9:45-10:45 am in the rooms indicated:

Journey with Scripture – Highland Room + Zoom

Facilitated by Rev. Henk Bossers

Seekers – Garth Overlook Room + Zoom

“A Consideration of One-state, with Equality for Israelis & Palestinians” video by Palestinian lawyer Jonathan Kuttub. Facilitated by Gwen Puza

Soul Food – Good Samaritan Room + Zoom

We will continue our discussion of *So You Want to Talk About Race* by Ijeoma Oluo. Facilitated by Rev. Joe Hajdu and other class members